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EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE FUTURE OF OUR ASSOCIATIONS

IN continuing the subject of local organizations it must be unquestioningly admitted that if they are dull or stagnant it is not because there is not enough for them to do. On the contrary, there is, in every State of our union, so large and ever increasing an array of special lines of work waiting to be done by somebody, that the real question ought to be how to distribute it so as to get it all under way and moving. We ask our readers to consider thoughtfully the different branches of activity which have so far been taken up or which are pressing to be taken up in our local groups.

First, there is the mutual duty of assistance to members. Under this head come sick benefit funds and their distribution; plans and provision for old age; extra help for emergencies; visiting and friendly aid of members who are sick or in trouble; the provision of hospital beds or wards for sick nurses; the establishment of club houses or coöperative apartments, and the assistance of new members with advice and information on all practical points of living and securing work.

Next, there are what one might call the simple or individual professional duties, those which affect directly the small local groups. Under this head may be classed all mutual efforts at self-improvement or culture, such as post-graduate lecture courses, study courses, organized post-graduate work in hospital or sanitarium, work on reports or

bulletins or journals published by the local association. Under this head, too, comes the duty of keeping the membership untainted; of knowing the character and standing of every member and of expelling any dishonorable individual without fear or favor: of setting a standard of ethical and professional conduct and seeing that it is lived up to as nearly as possible. To this division belongs also the duty of conducting ethical and professional directories or central offices where the members of the nursing profession who stand on an honorable plane may get calls for cases and for hospital positions. Finally, under this head comes a duty which has so far been little exercised by nurses, although it is well known to graduates of colleges and universities, namely, the duty of graduates to take continuous active interest in the status and policy and progress of the training school in which they were taught. It will be a new thought to many nurses that they could or should ever have anything to say as to the conduct and policy of their training school, yet to do so is not only simple but it is often urgently needed; and it has, moreover, been done with excellent results, so that the example is not wanting. It can be done in a dignified and fitting way by *organized* bodies of graduates. Probably few nurses are in a position to bring much individual influence to bear on training school matters, but an organized body can bring its views and suggestions before hospital directors and training school managers by resolution or petition in a way that is certain to receive attention and which may often be effective. As an illustration, we may mention the well-known action of the Orange Alumnæ in petitioning the managers to lengthen the course of training to the highest standard with complete success. We also remember an instance where the Alumnæ interfered successfully when a certain board of managers was considering a proposal made to it by a medical society to take over the nurses' directory.

We believe it is not only possible but essential for the organized graduates of schools to make themselves heard on important questions affecting their schools. Such action, of course, must never descend to petty interference, but must be limited to matters of principle. If, for instance, a base political element threatens the good name of a school (and our daily press has lately published such an instance), we hold that the alumnæ should publicly and emphatically protest. We also are of the opinion that the Alumnæ Association should ask for representation on the Board of Managers.

A third branch of work comprises all that may be called general social interests, such as sharing in the work of philanthropic or charitable or civic or reforming bodies of people. Under this we include such move-

ments as the war against tuberculosis; the various lines of activity taken up by women's clubs; great questions of public health and humane and decent conditions for working people, such as the work of the Consumers' League, the Woman's Trades-Union League, the warfare against Child Labor, the Pure Food agitation and the patent medicine crusade, as well as the various smaller questions of good, clean, decent house-keeping and home-making in cities in which women are now properly interesting themselves, such as public school hygiene, improved housing for wage-earners, small parks and playgrounds, and so on *ad infinitum*. In all such lines of work nurses are being more and more called on to take a part, and to know something about them, and to take an intelligent interest in them.

Fourth and last, we have the line of activity, which we may call the broad and specific professional work, which calls us to consider our educational conditions in nursing and brings us into relation with our State and national obligation. Such is the work of State legislation on which we have entered and which we dare never relinquish, but which will claim closer attention and more unremitting devotion as time goes on; for, like all educational work, it will never be finished, never be perfect, and can never be neglected without falling back into a degraded state.

We believe that nurses who have realized the magnitude and importance of these many lines of work pressing upon us, will generally agree that to deal with them justly requires new and specialized forms of organization. Not too few, but too many, interests have besieged the members of our Alumnae Associations and City Clubs, and in trying to respond to all they are often like the man who tries to be in three places at once. We believe that the solution lies in developing a general system of county societies, on strictly geographical lines, which shall include every county and State in our union, to specialize on the one sole branch of State legislation work. This will relieve our Alumnae and General Club members of a mass of detail which is growing larger every day and requires the individual attention of uniform groups formed to cope with State work and with nothing else; while the older organizations will be free to devote themselves to all those lines of work which they can do better than county societies.

It is evident that the first three divisions of work given can all be perfectly well done by the Alumnae Association or the general Club or Society, either singly or in affiliation, and that certain things could never be so well done by any group formed on purely legal or geographical lines. In many kinds of close personal work the tie of

early association is strong and almost like the family tie. But a large public work, such as that of our State societies, which bring us into dealings with men and legislatures must be organized in a way which they recognize. The county is the legal unit of the State and every legislator knows just what a county society means. The county society should include *every registered nurse* in the county and *no others*. We think it is most fortunate that county societies have not been organized generally at the outset of our movement when there was no recognized standard of membership. Now, the sole requisite of membership should be the R. N. of the State. In a rational division of labor the county society should undertake solely such work and details of work as belong to State registration. Preëminently the duty of the county society should be to ferret out cases of infraction or non-observance of the law, to know whether any woman in the county fraudulently uses the R. N., whether anyone has obtained the degree by fraud, and to bring proof of the same. A county society which diligently does its duty in guarding the standards set by the State law will have no time for anything else; and, if such societies undertake any of the lines of work coming under our first three heads, it is our opinion that they will simply become generally ineffective.

In our next number we will consider the question of how to reach individuals and keep up a general interest in organization work.

DO PROPERLY TRAINED NURSES PRESCRIBE

A POINT of general importance to nurses was touched upon at the New York State meeting—that of the occasional disgraceful action of individual nurses in giving drugs without the physician's order.

Dr. Lytle spoke justly and candidly of this most reprehensible fault, and a nurse present mentioned a deplorable instance which had come under her knowledge. As nursing is rising into a profession the importance of strict ethical observance of this line of demarcation between the physician and the nurse cannot be too strongly emphasized.

If physicians have any just cause of complaint on this score, or if such instances as we heard at Niagara come to their knowledge, it will certainly greatly weaken the claim of nurses that physicians should be more "loyal" to them. In the case of New York State nurses, at any rate, some of them need perhaps to be reminded that a clause in the New York Act forbids the nurse to practice medicine. Perhaps the prosecution by the Medical Society of a nurse who had committed a breach of trust by recommending drugs might be a wholesome lesson.

We have always held that a *well-trained* nurse will never prescribe. This attitude has also been taken by those members of the medical profession whose loyalty to nurses is of a staunch and generous character. The physicians of England, whose testimony before the Select Committee was of such inestimable value to the cause of progress, all denied emphatically the suggestion that nurses, if highly trained, might err in this direction. It is only the partially trained or imperfectly educated women who will do this was their opinion. We believe this subject would bear examination in nursing centres, and that the bad taste of assuming a position which does not belong to one ought to be constantly reiterated.

The subject of Dr. Lytle's paper is one of great interest to all nurses but especially valuable to teachers of nurses. It should be studied carefully by all training school superintendents.

We shall give another paper bearing on the subject of the nurse's use of drugs in an early issue, written from the point of view and experience of a druggist.

PROPRIETARY DRUG LEGISLATION

SEVERAL American States are warring through their legislatures on patent or proprietary medicines, the enormous use of the which is fast becoming a serious menace to the public health and an alarming factor in intemperance, besides being one of the most colossal examples of that system of sham which is undermining the character of thousands of thoughtless or simple people.

It is not well known that most patent medicines contain large amounts of alcohol, with which often drugs of a dangerous character are combined, such as should only be given upon the prescription of a physician. Pennsylvania is asking that the dealers in such drugs shall pay the State license tax for the sale of alcohol; while other States are demanding the publication of the contents of every proprietary medicine on every package. It has been stated that Peruna, for instance, which sells at a dollar a bottle, can be made at home for eight cents, being practically nothing but alcohol and water with a little flavoring.

While the different States are taking action Congress will also be asked to pass a bill to be introduced by Senator Heyburn, of Idaho, which will deal with the whole subject of adulteration of foods, drugs, and liquors. Nurses, who have so much opportunity to advise and teach, should regard it as a public duty to warn patients and friends of the dangers of patent medicines and of adulterated articles. We are led to remember that one of the Superintendents' Society, Miss Ban-

field, of Philadelphia, has contributed to this reform wave by her article on proprietary drugs some few years ago in a popular journal,—one of the few which accepts no advertisements of such compounds.

THE RED CROSS

WE shall have an exceedingly interesting report of the Red Cross work for February.

JUVENILE COURTS AND PROBATION WORK

WE give in this number an account of the work of the Matron of a juvenile court which we are glad to present to our readers, not only because this is a new opening for nurses, but because the extension of the Probation System and Juvenile Courts for youthful offenders is one of the encouraging features of modern society which nurses ought to be informed about as intelligent members of society.

It is depressing to think that modern civilization does not keep children out of courts. But no one can for a moment dispute that, if the children must get into the courts, it is the imperative duty of motherly and large hearted women to follow them there. Such is the woman who sends us this contribution, and we think that, when the love of humanity is present, the nurse's training will equip one with distinctive capacity for this work. The number of States passing juvenile court legislation is constantly increasing and we shall give some more details of the spread of this legislation and its effects when the new report dealing with the whole subject appears.

TUBERCULOSIS EXHIBIT IN NEW YORK

THE Tuberculosis Exposition just held in New York has been largely attended and has aroused widespread interest. Over 10,000 persons went to see it in the first week. The evening lectures brought together representatives from special bodies, such as the American Federation of Labor, the public school teachers, the physicians, etc. The plan is now to send the exhibit to Boston, Philadelphia and other large cities. We shall have a description of the exhibits from Miss La Motte.

DO DISTRICT NURSES DO NURSING

AN article entitled *The Visiting Nurse and the Nurses' Settlement*, by Mary Buell Sayles, in *The Outlook* for October 21, raises a question of great importance in visiting nursing which we do not doubt—and especially since we have an organ of the district nursing

interests in the field—will receive full attention. It is, in brief, the point how much actual nursing work is done in visiting or district nursing, and how much is the work of practical nursing subordinated to the necessity of making a great number of visits? We are inclined to think that Miss Sayles, in her sympathy with the Settlement work and through possible uninformedness as to visiting work in general, has not done justice to the many organizations whose basic principle of work is careful nursing. On the other hand her remark that “workers along this line in other cities will do well to shape their endeavors” on the principles observed at the Settlement may only mean her recommendation for future work, and not necessarily that she infers that no other workers are now following lines of good nursing and intelligent interest in the family. Such an inference would, of course, be most inaccurate, and it is not likely she would wish this inference to be taken. It is true, however, that New York City shows examples among her many and varied forms of visiting nursing of both systems; and we fear that in the system of many calls and little nursing there is much of danger to the sound nursing standards of the nurse, and much that is unsatisfactory to the patient. A luminous truth is, that wherever we find visiting nursing work carried on under the management of nurses, good nursing work and humane care of the family, as a whole, are the rule; and where the visiting nurse is directly under medical control, as in dispensaries, this part of her work is as a rule subordinated to the actual carrying out of orders, application of treatment, etc., the patient not being regarded from the motherly standpoint but only as a case. We believe there is much need of exchange of views on this subject.

EXTRACTS FROM MISS SAYLES' ARTICLE

While to “visit the sick” has always been an enjoined part of the religious man's duty, and has been practiced by bodies of men and by individuals for many centuries, it is only within the last half-century, since the profession of nursing has become an essential part of our civilization, that the visiting nurse as we know her has come into being. Even to-day the ideals toward which she strives in her work are by no means always the same. Broadly speaking, there are two leading conceptions of her function which underlie what we may call the two schools of visiting nursing.

The first and older of these two conceptions is that of the nurse as the doctor's assistant, who may or may not accompany him on his rounds, but whose sole function is to carry out in each case his specific directions. The second conception makes the nurse responsible, not only for following the physician's orders, but for giving to each patient care closely approaching what he would receive in a first-class hospital.

Thus,—to illustrate by an example typical of many known to have occurred,—suppose the case of a patient suffering from rheumatism. A public dispensary physician is called in, prescribes, and sends the dispensary nurse to give certain specified local treatment. This she faithfully does; but suppose she finds that the patient has been confined for weeks to her bed, with no one to change or air the bedding, bathe her properly, or comb her hair. Still, acting as doctor's assistant the nurse cannot take time to minister to the patient's general needs, but, having carried out the physician's instructions, must hasten on to attend to other cases. When one learns that upwards of fifteen,—indeed in some cases, upwards of thirty,—visits constitute the ideal day's work for nurses of this school, it is at once apparent how brief a time must be spent upon each case.

What does the nurse of the second school do under the circumstances we have supposed? The physician's instructions are of course followed by her as carefully as by her sister nurse; but this is not all. She airs the room, makes up the bed with fresh sheets,—supplying these, if need be, from the store placed at her disposal by the organization which stands behind her; she gives the patient a complete bath, puts clean garments upon her, and gently combs out and arranges her matted hair. Day after day she continues this bathing and attention to the patient's general well-being, greatly alleviating her sufferings and furnishing by the way valuable and friendly neighbors. None of us who have watched the ministrations of a trained nurse in a well-to-do private family or a hospital ward will be surprised when, on inspecting the daily record of a visiting nurse of this type, we find that it shows but eight or ten visits, as over against the fifteen or twenty made by the nurse of the other school."

PROGRESS IN SETTLEMENT WORK

AN interesting development of the family life of the Nurses' Settlement in New York is that certain members are taking residence directly in the tenements as Miss Wald and Miss Brewster did years ago, choosing their homes in those districts where their work is. Miss Johnson and Miss Forbes have a charming little home of three rooms and a bath on the East Side among the Germans, and Miss Bezly and Miss Simmons have an equally pretty one on the West Side in an Italian quarter. Mrs. Rallyea lives on Henry street, in an old-fashioned tenement in an Irish row. They all do at least the greater part of their own housekeeping, and deck their rooms with simple but pretty things typical of their neighborhoods,—Russian and Italian brass, and earthenware pottery found on the push-carts. Thus each little center becomes in turn a fresh nucleus for neighborhood work and individual interests as well as nursing.

"CHARITIES" NURSING NUMBER

Charities and the Commons will issue a special number in February dealing with nursing work being done on special social lines, such as visiting nursing, public school nursing, tuberculosis work in connection with Boards of Health and special dispensaries, Nurses' Settlements, etc. Some of our best known and most capable women have promised to contribute to this issue, as it will bring the work in which they are interested prominently before an intelligent and sympathetic lay public. Miss L. L. Dock has become one of the collaborators of *Charities and the Commons* under the recent reorganization.

A NEW BOOK ON VISITING NURSING

MISS YSABELLA G. WATERS, of the Nurses' Settlement in New York, who has made an exhaustive investigation into district or visiting nursing in the United States, is preparing a book dealing with this branch of work which will include a complete bibliography of district nursing associations.

Miss Waters' investigation began with sending out one hundred letters of inquiry for a paper to be given at Portland. This was just enough to open the way and she has since then written several thousand letters, sending them to postmasters and other public persons in all parts of the country. As soon as her investigations are completed we will give some figures that will be of great interest, showing the rapid development of visiting nursing associations.

Miss Waters' book will be a most valuable addition to nursing literature.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THE reports from Indiana are most satisfactory and encouraging. At the end of November certificates of registration had been granted to 275 nurses and applications were being received for many more. The leaders in this movement already begin to see great benefits in the raising of standards of education and in the growing recognition of professional status. As the Indiana bill went into effect only last Winter and the pioneer period was hardly yet passed, the reports are very satisfactory. The number of nurses to be registered is not as great in Indiana as in some of the other States.

CALIFORNIA

There has been much difficulty in California in getting the registration law into operation because of the seeming unwillingness of the

Regents of the University of California to assume the responsibilities placed upon them by the legislature but there has been a conference between a committee of nurses, members of the medical profession and the Regents, and the outlook begins to be more encouraging.

MASSACHUSETTS

The meeting of the Massachusetts State Nurses' Association held in Worcester on November 16th was very largely attended and proved to be a most interesting occasion. The secretary's report, shown on another page, gives a comprehensive idea of the support which this association is receiving from prominent citizens throughout the State. The Massachusetts attitude towards State registration is most conservative, but eventually the nurses will carry the day. There is no State in the Union which needs registration more than Massachusetts. Both medical quackery and nursing quackery seem to be entirely unrestrained. It is interesting to know that "the nurse" who has figured so prominently in the recent dress-suit murder case served only a few months in one of the large hospitals of Boston, and in the newspaper notoriety has not been distinguished from the great body of reputable and skilful women which makes up the nursing profession of the State.

CONNECTICUT

The report of the Connecticut State meeting should have appeared last month, but was not sent us by the secretary until just as this issue is going to press.

WASHINGTON

The report is also found in the official department of the completion of the organization of the State Association of Washington. The distances in this State between the nursing centers are very great and organization will necessarily be slow. At the two great centers, Seattle and Spokane, are groups of intelligent enthusiastic women who will in time bring about the passage of a bill which will give proper protection to the public and to the nurses.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Once more the Nurses' Association of the District of Columbia is preparing a bill to present to the legislature and the members seem to be not in the least discouraged by the previous failures. We wish them success and advise holding to high standards even if failure results. Better no bill than one of half way measures.

ILLINOIS

Illinois is again to the front. In unity is strength.

NEW YORK

Again we remind the nurses of New York State that the last of the practical examinations and the first of the full examinations are to be held at the end of January and that applications for either one should be made at once to the Educational Department, Albany, N. Y. The terms of the waiver expire in April, 1906, after which time none will be granted the R. N. without taking a full examination, and only those graduates whose schools are registered will be eligible for the full examination.

Some of the New York Alumnae Societies are sending return postals to all graduates of the schools, irrespective of whether they are registered or not, reminding them of the date of the expiration of the waiver and this should be done by every organization in the State.

The Education Department at Albany has not thought it wise to grant the request of the Board of Nurse Examiners for the appointment of a nurse inspector of training schools, but has requested the members of the board to act as special inspectors in close cases. Miss Damer, Miss Hitchcock and Miss Palmer have already been called upon to make such inspections when the standard of work and teaching were difficult to determine.

THE YEAR 1906

WITH the coming of the New Year the nurses of all countries may look forward with hope and satisfaction to the future; for at no time in the history of the world have so many varied opportunities for usefulness been open to them as to-day; nor are these opportunities likely to diminish but rather to increase. In all countries the prospects for advancing the status of nurses through better and broader education are bright, and in our own especially so.

The professional journals of the nursing profession have helped to bring about improvements and advances in a way that few realize except those who are directly observing public currents of thought. In the United States it is hardly possible to estimate the importance of our advantage in having the JOURNAL as an engine and organ of progress in the work of defining and building up standards. What it is to us we can realize perhaps by imagining ourselves in Russia, where men and women are willing to die to secure the freedom of the press.

We warmly thank our subscribers for their past support and are confident that we may continue to expect it. We want also to remind the great mass of nurses who are cut off from the work of leadership and who are unable to take a share in the responsibilities and anxieties of public work for the profession, that to subscribe to the JOURNAL is one practical and definite way in which they can do their share in helping on the larger work. No matter how secluded or absorbed, every one who feels a duty to the great general movement of progress can help in this way. To those who remain indifferent we would say: "Wake up! Look about you, and see the efforts being made on every side by small groups of people who think of the future and wish it to be better. Dare any of us enjoy the paths made easy by others' toil, and not do something ourselves to make things better for those who come after? 'Lend a Hand.'"

To old friends and new "A Happy New Year."

Charities and the Commons in announcing its new publication committee and proposed enlargement of work says, under the heading "Facts Which the Public Should Know:"

"When at the beginning of the twentieth century a Missouri professor finds a lunatic chained to a log; when a legislative committee finds insane patients brutally whipped in Florida; when a Maryland Commission finds a naked maniac caged by county officials in a shed; when children and idiots are still housed together in almshouses of Vermont; when within a stone's throw of the White House and the Capitol housing conditions exist in the blind alleys of Washington which are a blot and a menace; when New Orleans is scourged by a fever bred in her neglected rookeries; when five boys grow up unlettered in a basement bag-factory in New York; when Georgia legislators vote down child labor bills annually and leave the children of their State less protected than those of Russia, or of the England of 1802;—there is compelling need for spokesmen who will challenge methods and theories with accumulated facts, who will resolutely work back from needs to causes, and who will stand out sturdily, as *Charities* has stood out, for new opportunities for the wage-earner, for new struggles against new forms of ignorance and selfishness, for new plans for lightening the burden of poverty, for new possibilities for the rescue of those who are drawn down by their unfavorable environment and the evil legacies of heredity, for new enthusiasms for American democracy."